

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Wednesday, December 15, 2010

CONTACT: MARA LEE

(202) 225-7163

Congresswoman Matsui Votes to Repeal “Don’t Ask Don’t Tell” Policy

WASHINGTON, DC— Today, Congresswoman Doris Matsui (D-Sacramento) voted in favor of H.R. 2695, the Don’t Ask Don’t Tell Repeal Act of 2010, which would eliminate the discriminatory policy that allows for dishonorable discharge of service members who are either openly gay or perceived to be. The bipartisan legislation to repeal the United States military’s “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” (DADT) policy has earned broad support among America’s military, and passed the House today as a stand-alone bill by a 250-175 vote.

“The House of Representatives voted again today to repeal the discriminatory and misguided Don’t Ask Don’t Tell policy,” stated Congresswoman Matsui, “Because America’s dedicated military members should be able to serve with honor and with dignity no matter their race, color, gender, creed, or sexual orientation. Our diversity is our strength; and our country is strongest when those who defend it reflect its diversity.”

Currently, the American military is the only workplace in the United States where homosexuality is legal grounds for dismissal. H.R. 2695 will provide for a careful and deliberate repeal of this policy following a certification by the Secretary of Defense, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, and the President that doing so is consistent with military readiness, military effectiveness, unit cohesion, and recruiting; and that the Department of Defense has prepared the necessary policies and regulations to implement repeal.

A recent Department of Defense study showed that 70 percent of forces believe openly serving gay and lesbian service members would have a little or no effect on their ability to serve this country. Additionally, studies of the militaries of Great Britain, Israel, Germany, Italy, Australia, and Canada – all of which permit homosexuals to serve openly – have shown no detrimental impact on recruitment or morale of those troops. In fact, U.S. service members are already serving alongside such troops from many of these nations in Iraq and Afghanistan, and there has been no sign of problems as a result.

“Our military is in great need of bright young people willing to serve; to discharge talented service members from our armed forces for being honest is contrary to the values of our military, and our country,” added Matsui. “By ending this controversial policy that has weakened our armed forces, we are supporting all of our nation’s troops and enabling our military to focus on their mission to protect the American people.”

The legislation now goes to the Senate for further consideration.

#